PRESS RELEASE

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

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sustainindy

CITY'S PILOT SEPARATION PROJECT TO UTILIZE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Project to reduce raw sewage overflows into Fall Creek, remove storm water pollutants naturally

INDIANAPOLIS – Mayor Greg Ballard and city officials met with residents Thursday night to discuss plans for the pilot separation project to be completed by the City of Indianapolis. The Fall Creek/College Avenue Pilot Project will be constructed near Fall Creek and College Avenue and will serve as a model for similar projects throughout the city.

"Building green infrastructure is a key part of our plan to make Indianapolis one of the most sustainable cities in the Midwest," said Mayor Ballard. "We're encouraging citizens and businesses to help by planting rain gardens and installing rain barrels. This green infrastructure project demonstrates that the city is truly leading by example, and this is just the beginning."

Green infrastructure manages, transports and treats storm water runoff through either the use of natural systems or engineered systems that mimic natural systems. Green infrastructure uses plants, soil and other natural elements to filter pollutants out of storm water before releasing it back into the environment. By reducing the amount of storm water entering the combined sewer system, green infrastructure also can help reduce raw sewage overflows into waterways such as Fall Creek.

Treating Storm Water Pollution Naturally

The Department of Public Works (DPW) will partially separate combined sewers near the Fall Creek Parkway and College Avenue area. Storm drains and storm sewers will collect storm water runoff and carry it to a bioretention cell, which is similar to a rain garden and is a landscaped area designed to remove pollutants from storm water through a system of plants, soil, stone and other natural elements.

This 70-foot by 35-foot bioretention cell will include a combination of more than 1,300 native trees, bushes and plants, including Red Maple, River Birch, and Witch Hazel. Deep-rooted, native plants speed water absorption, which makes them ideal for storm water management. The cell is designed to treat up to one inch of rainfall,

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also known as the "first flush." Once the storm water has been collected and treated, it will flow directly into Fall Creek.

DPW will install two monitoring structures to collect water quality samples before and after treatment in the biorentention cell. The water quality monitoring data will allow DPW to improve and enhance the design of similar projects in the future.

Reducing Raw Sewage Overflows into Fall Creek

In addition to improving the quality of storm water entering Fall Creek, this project will reduce the amount of storm water entering the combined sewer system, which will help reduce the volume and frequency of raw sewage overflows into Fall Creek. By reducing the amount of clear water that is unnecessarily transported to and treated at the city's two wastewater treatment plants, green infrastructure projects also may reduce the cost of the city's federally-mandated 20-year plan to reduce raw sewage overflows that is currently underway.

The Fall Creek/College Avenue Green Infrastructure Pilot Project is anticipated to cost approximately $500,000, is funded by sanitary sewer user fees and is a part of the recent sanitary sewer rate increase. Construction is anticipated to begin in August 2009. For more information, visit www.indycleanstreams.org.

Mayor Ballard launched SustainIndy and created the Office of Sustainability in October 2008. Both represent an innovative enterprise aimed at delivering long-term cost savings to the city, building the local economy, improving our quality of life, and enhancing our environmental and public health. Its efforts are designed to aggressively move Indianapolis forward in making it one of the most sustainable cities in the Midwest. For more information, visit www.sustainindy.org.

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